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THE JEWISH QUESTION IN ITS RECENT ASPECTS.

I.

WHAT is vaguely known as the "Jewish Question" has received considerable attention of late,*—more, perhaps, than it at present merits,—for though the question is a vital one to the Jews and only less vital to non-Jews, it is not a problem pressing for immediate solution. In some form or the other, there has been a Jewish Question ever since there has been a Christian Question. Simultaneous with the appearance of Christianity, as an offshoot of Judaism and yet distinct from it, the unique phenomenon was presented to the world of a people losing its national independence, its country, and, to all practical purposes, its language, and yet retaining its identity as distinctly as though it possessed all three of these factors. Add to this the circumstance that the Jews, following the general movements of culture, spread over all parts of the globe whither Christianity travelled, and you have the reasons for the permanent character of the "Jewish Question," so far as the relation of the Jews to the world around them is concerned. A problem whose roots are so deeply sunk in the past cannot be hastily disposed of; in fact, it may be doubted whether it is capable of solution. Like so many other questions that seem to form part and parcel of our civilization,—a legacy bequeathed by one generation to the other—it enters upon new phases from time to time, but never wholly disappears.

At its origin the question is much more of a political than a religious one. I have just said that the Jewish Question is as old as the Christian Question; but in some of its aspects the former even antedates the latter. The evidence

* "Israel Among the Nations: a Study of the Jews and of Antisemitism." By Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu. Translated by Frances Hellman. New York: Putnam's Sons, 1895. "The Spirit of Judaism." By Josephine Lazarus. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1895. "The Jewish Question and the Mission of the Jews." New York: Harper & Bros., 1894.

for this has recently been collected in an admirable work by Theodore Reinach.*

The dispersion of the Jews creates a Jewish Question, and this dispersion begins with the so-called Babylonian exile at the beginning of the sixth century before our era. The restoration of the commonwealth at the close of that century is only partial. Large settlements of Jews remained in Mesopotamia, while, through the closer contact between Orient and Occident established by Alexander's conquests, the Jewish colonies in Egypt, settled there since the days of Nebuchadnezzar II., or earlier, constantly received fresh accessions. As a result of the teachings of the prophets and of the national experience, the Jews were led to differentiate two factors,—religion and national life—which for the rest of the ancient world seemed inseparable. Whether we turn to the Greeks in the West or to the Assyrians in the East, we find that religion was not so much a matter of soul as of soil. There could be no religion without a country, and citizenship was indissolubly bound up with loyalty to the god or gods presiding over a district. The Jews of Egypt, although granted considerable privileges by the Ptolemies, formed a state within a state, and the same was true, as Mommsen has shown,† of the Jews of Palestine when that country fell under the sway of imperial Rome. The complications ensuing from such a state of affairs were at the bottom of all the troubles which came over the Jews. Their religion was merely an element in the general contrast that they presented to the political conditions prevailing in antiquity. Religious toleration was a principle recognized as a corollary from the prevailing view, which accorded to each land and district its own religion. Cyrus recognizes Marduk as the god of Babylon and Yahwe as the god of Judæa. Alexander worships Ammon in Egypt, but a people without a country could have no religion. Their god or gods had ceased to exist, and hence to the Romans

* "Textes d'Auteurs Grecs et Romains relatifs au Judaïsme, réunis, traduits et annotés." Paris, 1895.

† "History of Rome," vol. v., chapter xi.

both the Jews and the early Christians appeared as "without god"—atheists.

It is not until the period when Christianity becomes established as the official religion of the Roman Empire that the Jewish Question becomes a religious one. In the Middle Ages, this aspect of the question is dominant. Religion, though still bound up with the state, is recognized as distinct from citizenship. The affront of the Jews consisted in their stubborn resistance to the alternating allurements and threats of the Church, which, claiming to be the sole repository of religious truth, was logically forced to assume an attitude of intolerance against such forms of belief as she regarded false or heretical. It seems strange that religious intolerance and hatred should make their appearance with religions of the most advanced type; yet the example of the Christianity of the Middle Ages and the example of Islam prove the correctness of the assertion, and had Judaism become the dominant religion of occidental civilization instead of Christianity, it is likely that the same spirit would have been manifested against Christians as was shown by Christianity against the Jews.

At present, the religious aspect of the Jewish Question has given way to one in which social considerations play a conspicuous part.

The political disabilities of the Jews have been removed in all civilized countries. Almost everywhere they are taking an active part—in some countries, a prominent part—in the commercial, political, and intellectual life of the century. As a result of the advance in religious thought, even the strict adherents of any particular form of religion have come to recognize that religious truth is many-sided. The numerous sects into which Christianity is split up furnish a guarantee that the era of intolerance and fanaticism is past, so far at least as Western civilization is concerned. The attempt on the part of Russia and Turkey to secure religious uniformity in their respective empires is sure to end in disastrous failure.

But there remains a strong social feeling against the Jews, which manifests itself in diverse ways and differently in the

various countries where Jews are found. Just as in the pre-Christian days and in the early Christian period, the religious factor was merely an *incidental* one, so at present both the religious and political factors are introduced into the Jewish Question as a support—frequently unconscious—to a feeling which is at bottom a purely social one. The very name, “anti-Semitic,” given to the present movement against the Jews, is significant. The German agitators recognize that their opposition is due to a prejudice against the Jews as representing what they term an “alien race;” but race feelings, whether justified or not, are admittedly social. Recognition must also be given to the consistency of the position maintained by such men as the late Professor von Treitschke. If the Aryan and the Semite are really two elements that can commingle as little as oil and water, then no alternative is offered but war to the knife, and war to the bitter end. The very success of the Jews in adapting themselves to a civilization which is claimed to be Aryan, constitutes at once a menace and a justification for the attempt to force the Jews back into the position of “innocuous desuetude” that characterized their life in the old ghettos. But it must not be overlooked that Christianity, as a religion which is in part a “Semitic” product, is involved in this “anti-Semitic” movement. As a matter of fact, many of those engaged in stirring up popular feelings against the Jews are only nominally Christians; and there are not wanting those who, like Goldwin Smith, advocate the casting aside of the Old Testament as a mill-stone that tends to crush the spiritual power of “Aryan” Christianity, though it seems strange that so eminent a scholar as Goldwin Smith should fail to see in the New Testament the product of the same “Semitic” thought which he finds in the Old.

The latest phase of the Jewish Question thus presents a curious parallel to its earliest phase. Precisely as Judaism and Christianity were equally involved in the struggle made by the ancient world against the differentiation of religion and national life, so in our age anti-Semitism, viewed from the religious side, is as much an attack upon Semitized Chris-

tianity as upon Semitic Judaism. If there is such a thing as Semitic thought in contrast to Aryan thought, then Judaism and Christianity stand and fall together.

II.

Two works have recently appeared which deal with the recent aspects of the problem,—an anonymous work under the title “The Jewish Question and the Mission of the Jews,” and a more elaborate work entitled “Israel chez Les Nations,” by the well-known French economist Leroy-Beaulieu, which is now rendered more accessible by appearing in an English translation.* The former—a series of independent essays of unequal value—is more of a defence of the Jews, the latter more of an exposition of the question. Both authors recognize that, in order to understand the Jewish Question, it is necessary to know the history of the Jews and to understand the meaning of that history. Nothing is easier than to furnish an off-hand opinion about the Jews; nothing, it might be added, is commoner. Such opinions are generally based upon personal experience which varies, and is in all cases limited and insufficient. Renan once said that only few people have any right to speak disparagingly of the Catholic Church, because only few can understand the intricate system upon which its organization is based. The “Jewish Question” may not be an intricate one, but it certainly calls for careful study and considerable knowledge. Of the two volumes under consideration, that of Leroy-Beaulieu is by far the more profound, more thorough, more suggestive, more satisfactory, and, it may be added, the more interesting. It is marked by a strong historical spirit. His aim is not to write an apology of the Jews, nor to defend them against unjust charges, but, firstly, to account for the existing feeling against them, and, secondly, to interpret this feeling. The method adopted by Leroy-Beaulieu, who styles himself in the preface “a Christian and a French-

* Mrs. Hellman's translation is very well done. It reads easily, though there are some slight inaccuracies—chiefly in the spelling of foreign words—which ought to be corrected in a second edition.

man," is better adapted than an apology for furnishing to such as are willing to consider the subject a correct view of the situation. He takes the Jews of to-day, submits them to a searching examination for the purpose of determining what traits—physiological and psychological—they possess that mark them off from others, and he compares his results with the conceptions current about the Jews. His readers may draw their own conclusions.

There are two features in this investigation that are particularly striking. In the first place, Leroy-Beaulieu shows how superficial the supposed contrast is implied by the terms "Semitic" and "Aryan"; and, secondly, he demonstrates the *recent* origin of so-called Jewish traits.

The late James Darmesteter (whom Leroy-Beaulieu frequently quotes) begins a notable essay on "Race and Tradition" * as follows: "The historical sciences in this century have subsisted on a single idea,—that of race. When one lives on a single idea, one is at last apt to die of it." It may be doubted whether any "single idea" has ever produced so much mischief as that of race. Supposed contrasts between races have been made the point of departure for justifying inveterate hatred and cruel hostility and inhuman offences committed by one nation against another. The doctrine of incessant warfare has been raised to the dignity of a scientific dogma, on the assumption that the mission of the races of mankind consists in engaging in bestial struggles with one another. The blood of one race cannot mix with the blood of another without detriment to both. Purity of race has been preached as at once the ideal and the condition of culture and happiness for a people.

It is high time to protest against doctrines so mischievous and so unfounded. The great mistake of historians and psychologists has consisted in confusing race with a factor which Darmesteter calls "tradition." The contrasts presented by two peoples are due not to physical features, but to surround-

* "Selected Essays." Translated by Helen Bachman Jastrow. Boston, 1895. Pp. 155-177.

ings. It may safely be asserted, moreover, that there is no such thing as a *pure* race. Races differ from one another only in degrees of impurity, and, as a matter of fact, so far from culture depending upon purity of blood in a people, the stimulus to intellectual powers comes from the commingling of races. Civilization would never have developed in the Euphrates Valley had it not been for the presence in that region, from the remotest days, of a variety of races. The ancient Egyptians were so "mixed" that anthropologists find it difficult to determine whether they should be classed among the Hamitic or the Semitic branch of mankind; and yet it was this very mixture that produced the wonderful civilization of ancient Egypt. In our days, the Germans, who are the loudest in clamoring for "racial purity," are perhaps the most conspicuous examples of the excellent results obtained by the mixture of Slavonic with Teuton blood. The supposed anthropological unity of the Aryans is a scientific myth. One cannot properly speak of "an Aryan race." There are at least five races to be distinguished among the various groups of peoples that speak languages closely related to one another.* The term Aryan, in the strict sense, is applicable only to the languages spoken by the groups, and even here the term has its limitations. Language is to a great extent an accidental factor. Two branches of the same race may speak languages derived from different parents. Nations drop their language and adopt another with surprising ease, and it does not therefore follow that the races speaking Aryan languages have a common origin.

The bearing of all this on the Jewish Question is obvious. What is true of "Aryan" applies to the term "Semitic." It is a convenient term for grouping a certain number of related languages together. These languages being spread over a territory much more limited than that covered by the Aryan group, it is but natural that the racial components in the case of those speaking Semitic tongues should be fewer in number. Up to the present, traces of only two distinct races have been found among the Semites. There may be more, and, at all

* Isaac Taylor, "The Origin of the Aryans."

events, in these two races there is considerable mixture of "Hamitic" elements. In Africa, more particularly, the dividing line between the Semites and Hamites becomes exceedingly faint. The Arabs of Arabia are perhaps the purest in blood of the Semites, but they are far from constituting a pure race. Mohammed himself married an Abyssinian. Mecca, the centre of Mohammedanism, is a gathering-place of all nations,* and the ethnic results may be imagined. The spread of Islam meant the substitution of a religious bond between groups which had hitherto been bound to one another by blood ties. The pilgrimage to Mecca, and other institutions of Islam, favored the mixture of races on a large scale throughout the Orient and in a considerable part of the Occident.

That the Jews are not a pure race is no longer questioned by any serious scholar. The researches of Isidor Loeb and Ernest Renan† have settled this point once for all. Leroy-Beaulieu furnishes additional evidence that clinches the argument. The strong injunctions of the Pentateuchal legislation against intermarriages between Hebrews and surrounding peoples‡—some of whom, like the Philistines, were not Semites, and none of whom were pure—is a proof that "mixed" marriages were common, if not indeed the rule. The protests of Ezra and Nehemiah, however effective, could not stamp out the results of what had gone before. The advent of the Greeks and Romans in Palestine constituted an additional menace to the purity of the Jewish race. The Rabbis found it necessary to draw the lines of demarcation between Jews and non-Jews even sharper than the Pentateuch did. Christianity threw down all barriers between races. A movement that assumed such gigantic proportions necessarily reacted on the Jews. The Talmud was Judaism's answer to Christianity, but even the great bulwark against "foreign" encroachments represented by the Talmudic regulations did

* See Snouck-Hurgronje's remarkable work, "Mekka," vol. i.

† Renan, "Le Judaïsme comme Race et comme Religion." (Paris, 1883.) (Art. Juifs in St. Martin's "Dictionnaire de Géographie." The opinions of Renan and Loeb are meeting with increased favor, despite Joseph Jacob's objections. ("Jewish Statistics," xvii.-xxx. London, 1891.)

‡ Deut. vii. 3.

not wholly check the tendency to make the Jews an "international race," if the term may be used. Late in the Middle Ages, despite the growing isolation of the Jews from the Christian communities in which they lived—notably in Spain and France—we learn of marriages between Jews and Christians, and the offsprings of such marriages were by no means all lost to Judaism. The Jews of Eastern Europe and Southern Russia exhibit several distinct anthropological types, all of them far removed from what is supposed to be the "original" Semitic type. Dr. Weissenburg, who has recently investigated the subject,* reaches the conclusion that the types are due to the commingling of Jews with other nations, which assumed large proportions during the period of the migrations of the Jews in the Caucasus and the Russian steppes. Renan, in summing up the question on its physical side, pertinently says that there is no such thing as a Jewish type; there are Jewish *types*. Weissenburg brands the idea of a Jewish type as a "popular myth." Whatever the proportion of "Aryan" and other blood in the Jewish race may be, it is certainly sufficient to demonstrate the absurdity of regarding the Jews as "pure" Semites.

But apart from this, if the historical and anthropological researches of the past decades count for anything, they certainly show that it is a totally unscientific procedure to throw Frenchmen, Germans, English, etc., into one group and label them "Aryans," and to throw all the Jews into another group and call them "Semites," and then proceed to pit the one against the other. Surely, the contrast between an intense Frenchman and a fanatic German is as great as anything can be imagined. The fact that both the Frenchman and the German can be labelled as "Aryans" does not diminish this contrast. The question of race, indeed, has little to do with these contrasts. In the same way the Jew of the United States has little in common with the Jew settled in one of the villages of Palestine and surrounded by comparatively undisturbed Oriental influences. His religion is an accidental fac-

* "Die Südrussischen Juden," etc. (*Archiv für Anthropologie*, vol. xxii.)

tor, and he stands much closer to his neighbor in the village, who may be a Christian, than he does to a coreligionist separated by thousands of miles, and who is the product of totally different circumstances. Again, the fact that the Englishman stands ethnologically closer to the German than the Frenchman, does not make the Englishman more of a German. What makes a man an Englishman with all his virtues and faults, with his characteristic traits and peculiarities, is primarily the fact that he lives in England, and, secondly, that he identifies himself with English interests. There is a good deal of anthropological philosophy in the ditty so popular a few years ago of the man who

"In spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations"

remained an Englishman. The grandfather of this intense Englishman may have been a German. Two generations would suffice to practically remove all traces of foreign origin, and had this grandfather emigrated to France or America, the grandson might have become an intense Frenchman or as thorough an American as the member of a family settled in this country for a longer period.

What we regard as national traits are the result of *tradition*, impressed upon people by virtue of living together under the same influences, sharing their interests with one another, and passing through the same experiences. Admitting that there is such a thing as an English spirit as distinguished from a German spirit, an English manner of looking at things, an English way of expressing one's self, and of conducting one's self, the factors involved in producing this spirit are simple enough,—climate, associations, and common experiences. Time does the rest. Leroy-Beaulieu shows in a most convincing manner that in so far as there is a distinctively Jewish spirit manifesting itself in various ways, or, perhaps, it would be better to say in innumerable ways, it has been *solely* the result of the conditions under which the Jews lived during the Middle Ages and down to the disappearance of the ghettos. Race has nothing to do with this result, and the

religion of the Jews only enters as a factor because it formed part of the conditions in question.

A recent writer in the *Quarterly Review* * commits the old blunder of supposing the peculiarities of the Jews to be due to "two thousand years of isolation." He is (so it is said) the "outcome of centuries fashioned by the Mishna and the Gemara,—" whatever that may mean. This writer, while characterizing the Jew, in phraseology more forcible than elegant, as the "money-dealer, doctor of medicine, astrologist, spy, huckster, and usurer in retail," declares that "the religion has formed the tribe."

As a matter of fact, the traits, both the favorable and unfavorable ones commonly associated with the Jews, are recent developments,—the result of the Middle Ages. The Bible has little to do with them; they are due to the social status, to which the Jews were condemned by the occidental world. In their own country the Hebrews were agriculturalists. The merchants and traders of antiquity were the Babylonians, and at a later period the Phœnicians. So weak was the commercial spirit among the Hebrews that they incorporated in their legislation a regulation which crippled all chances of commercial enterprise,—the prohibition against lending money on interest.† Commerce on any large scale is impossible without credit,—so the economists tell us and so experience shows. There can be no doubt that the stipulation of the "Code of Holiness" and of the "Deuteronomist" is directly aimed against the commercial methods of Babylonia. Thousands of clay tablets found in the ruins of Babylonian temples show that money-lending—the average interest was twenty per cent.—was the condition that insured the great commercial activity of the Euphrates Valley. The blow aimed against interest was fatal to commerce. The anti-commercial sentiment of the Hebrew legislation finds an echo in a Psalm belonging to the late post-exilic period, which

* "The Modern Jew." (May, 1896, p. 31.) The article is characterized by a bias and a prejudicial spirit which is painful in the extreme.

† Lev. xxv. 36, 37; Deut. xxiii. 20. No distinction is made between "interest" and "usury." All "increase" on the capital is absolutely forbidden.

declares that he who lends his money on interest has "no place in the Lord's tabernacle."*

The Pentateuch, taken as a whole, is applicable to an agricultural people only, and had the Hebrews been traders, they would have produced an entirely different code. Nor were the Hebrews "doctors of medicine," nor "astrologists." Astrology was the prerogative of the Babylonians among ancient nations. Medicine, in so far as it was differentiated from magic, was cultivated by Babylonians and Egyptians. The mind of the ancient Hebrew did not have a scientific bent. Philosophy does not arise among them until they come into contact with the Greeks. Even in the prophets—the highest exponents of ancient Hebrew thought—there is but little that merits to be called speculation. Ecclesiastes reflects Greek influence.

The totally changed conditions of life that began for the Jews with their dispersion over the face of the globe is the fundamental factor that produced a change in their traits. The second factor is the treatment they received at the hands of the masters and of the masses into whose territory they came. It is a serious mistake to suppose that the Jew everywhere turned out to be alike. He was moulded entirely by circumstances. The Jew of Europe is not the same as the Jew of Asia. If in Western Europe they become "money-dealers" and "doctors of medicine," it is simply because, under the restrictive laws imposed upon them by the rulers of Europe, they were prohibited from entering upon other pursuits. In his personal habits no less than in his pursuits, the Jew of Europe is the product of the Middle Ages. Take any body of people and shut them up in a quarter where but for necessary contact they lead an isolated life and continue this process for only a few generations, and the result will necessarily be a "peculiar" people, no matter to what race they belong and what religion they profess. The Romany of Europe and the Parsees of India are examples in point.†

* Psalm xv.

† See Brinton, "An Ethnologist's View of History," Philadelphia, 1896, p. 11; and Weissenburg's investigations above referred to *passim*.

Living together, thinking alike, leading the same life engenders a body of traditions which stamp themselves upon all individuals alike. The Jew of Italy in the Middle Ages resembles the Jew of Germany simply because there were ghettos in both countries. Even the physical features can be accounted for on this ground. A distinctive dress, in part forced upon them and in part retained by them because of their non-participation in the changing fashions, had much to do with accentuating the traits engendered by ghetto life. As for the religion of the Jews, it naturally exerted a great influence upon them, because with the Jews Judaism, also, was confined within the ghetto walls. The Jews were not "fashioned by the Mishna and Gemara," but during the centuries that they lived a restricted life the religious spirit pervading the Talmud was the only spiritual influence to which they were subject. What was the result of this spirit? That it produced a certain one-sidedness cannot be questioned, any more than that the Puritans of New England, deliberately shutting themselves off against all but such influences as were congenial to them, developed a single side of their nature at the expense of others. We may not approve of the general spirit pervading the Talmud, though, considering the fact that the Talmud is a literary compilation covering six centuries, it is not easy to specify what this spirit was. But this at least may be said: the Talmud, like the Bible, is open to various interpretations. The Bible interpreted by the Puritans is certainly not the same as expounded by the historical student of the present day. Similarly, the Talmud would have been viewed by the Jews of the Middle Ages in an entirely different light had they read and studied it in the broad daylight and not in the dark, stuffy corners of the ghetto.

The great philosopher Maimonides found it possible to reconcile the Talmudic enactments with an advanced type of Aristotelian philosophy, of which he was an ardent disciple. His interpretation of the Talmud was subsequently rejected by the Jews, not because Maimonides was wrong, but because his view of it did not meet the conditions of life under which

the Jews from about the fourteenth century on throughout Western Europe were forced to live. It may be said of every age that it produces its own Bible—suited to its needs. The Talmud became the Bible for the Jews of the ghetto. The Jews, so far from being fashioned by the Mishna and Gemara, themselves fashioned the Mishna and Gemara to their purposes. If, instead of taking the Talmud as their guide, they would have taken the Old Testament—as a Jewish sect that sprung up in the ninth century and known as the Karaites did—the result would have been the same. The Bible would have become their Talmud. The moral precepts and spiritual passages to be found in the Talmud are as fine as anything in the Old or the New Testament, but you can put a narrow, one-sided spirit into the Bible, or the Buddhist scriptures for that matter, quite as readily as into the Talmud. “The letter everywhere killeth.” But, after all, it may be asked, What has this much abused and much misunderstood Talmud done? It undoubtedly made the Jews slaves to the letter of what to them was the Divine Law. It led them to surround themselves with minute regulations controlling all their actions. Their religion became a mass of ceremonies and customs. But all this was their own affair. If they were satisfied to burden their lives with a thousand and one prescriptions, what mattered it to others? The world did not care for them. It deliberately shut them off from other influences than such as the Jews could create for themselves. The Talmud was exactly the kind of religion adapted for their conception of life, or, as we ought to put it, the Jews adapted the Talmud to the needs called forth by a ghetto existence. They could not do anything else. The moment the walls of the ghetto disappeared, the Talmud of the ghetto vanished like a cloud driven by a fresh morning breeze. Even before they were readmitted to citizenship in the world, the Jews began the work of freeing themselves from the yoke of ceremonialism. That process has steadily gone on in direct proportion to the civil liberties granted to them, until to-day the Jews, who are natives of Western Europe and America, are as far removed from the Talmud as their Christian neighbors. The

vast majority of them are as ignorant of the great legal compilation as the "anti-Semitic" agitators are who write about it without being able to read a single line of it in the original. Just here the importance of Leroy-Beaulieu's warning that we must not judge Jews by a single standard is strikingly illustrated. In Russia, where the condition of the Jews resembles the ghetto life of the Middle Ages, and in parts of Eastern Europe, "Half-Asia"—as the Austrian novelist Franzos calls it—where their treatment is only a small improvement upon that meted out to them by Russian barbarism, the Talmud of the ghetto still holds a certain sway; but take those Jews and transplant them to England, France, the United States, or the Argentine Republic, and in a single generation a great transformation takes place. The rapidity with which the Russian Jews are assimilating themselves in this country to American ways and manner of thought, the still greater ease with which German Jews become Americans in soul and body, is the most striking proof for the correctness of Leroy-Beaulieu's assertion, that the traits peculiar to the Jews have been impressed upon them, not by racial instincts, nor by their religion, but *solely* by the ghetto. Our French author goes so far as to declare that the virtues of the Jews are of their own making. For their vices and unpleasant traits he holds the Christian world responsible,—that world which tarnished the bright name of Christ by the cruel spirit that it manifested towards the Jews, that defamed its Gospel of Love by inhuman treatment of millions of human beings, that trod upon the very principles of justice and mercy which it professed to teach mankind. Perhaps this is going too far, but at all events Leroy-Beaulieu is right in emphasizing the fact that the virtues of the Jews *are* of their own making. Their sobriety, their industry, the purity of their domestic life, the strong family attachment, are all traits as directly resulting from ghetto life as their clannishness (which still prevails) represents the other side of the picture and due to the same cause, and as their tendencies to commercial life, on the one hand, and to intellectual pursuits, on the other,—both tendencies holding the balance to one

another,—are the natural outcome of the two factors at play in ghetto life—shrewdness engendered by timidity, and concentration of effort.

The Jew of Western Europe and of America has, to all practical purposes, entered the common arena of life, where he meets on equal terms with his fellow-struggler and fellow-worker. Traces of the ghetto still remain with the Jew, and will remain just as long as traces of the unjust discriminations against the Jew remain in our modern statutes. The Jews, by general admission, occupy honorable positions in science, in literature, and the arts. They are contributing their share to that industrial and commercial development which is as characteristic of this century as the achievement in scientific investigations, and which is as essential to the progress of civilization. Withal that, certain peculiarities of manner still distinguish many of them, peculiarities not in themselves reprehensible, but which naturally make them a target for those sweeping generalizations which persons judging from the surface of things are prone to indulge in. The perfect assimilation in outward form—speech and general deportment—to the standards peculiar to each country is, after all, a question of individual culture. More serious is the tendency of the Jews to confine their social intercourse to their own people. Such a course is certain to preserve peculiarities and to engender new ones. Of course, there are two sides to this question. "Clannishness" does not cover the whole subject. A fear of being obtrusive is an important factor in accounting for the unwillingness of many Jews to extend their circle beyond certain bounds. Doors are not always opened to receive them with a hearty welcome. Still, much can be done by the cultured ones among them to come into closer contact with persons and things around them. Perhaps at the bottom of this clannishness—for such in large measure it is—there lies a certain lack of public spirit, an inaptitude on the part of many of them to interest themselves in the great movements looking to the general advancement of education and the social betterment of the race. True, the Jews are generous and charitable, but a certain clannish spirit mars even their generosity. It is right that they should

feel strongly the obligation to help their own unfortunate and weaker brethren, but it is not right that their efforts should stop here. The cry of their own flesh must not make them deaf to the far stronger cry of suffering humanity. In their own charitable undertakings, a broader spirit might be manifested. Let them open their benevolent institutions, their employment bureaus, their educational missions and not merely their hospitals, to all, regardless of creed. At least, let them not proclaim to the world that their charity is based on the distinction between Jew and non-Jew. It must be confessed that in the various movements of our days that aim at promoting the highest endeavors of mankind in the search for knowledge, as well as in those undertakings which seek to lift up the "submerged tenths" of the great cities out of the slough into which they have fallen, in the efforts being made all over the civilized world to improve the conditions of the working classes, the Jews are not contributing a share proportionate to their numbers and ability. In the noteworthy endowments to universities made during the past decade, Jews cut a poor figure. It would contribute much to their standing if they would help along the great educational institutions of this country. They do not found libraries or establish public museums. They take but little interest in college settlements. Questions of municipal reform appeal to only very few among them, and so other illustrations might be adduced in support of the proposition advanced. But surely it is not remarkable that some trace of the sad isolation of the ghetto days should still remain. "Public spirit" is perhaps the highest of the civic virtues, one that comes only to those who have the mind to see *far* more clearly and the heart to feel far more keenly than the average individual the general needs of the community in which he lives. The struggle for existence was a severe one for the Jews during this century. Their energies were consumed in adapting themselves to the new world into which they were permitted to enter. The past generations were handicapped in the race. The present starts out under more favorable auspices. On the Jews of to-day will rest the reproach, if they fail to take their place with the

earnest body of men and women who, stirred by the great ideals of the seers of all ages and all faiths, are endeavoring to lead humanity on to the heights, to help weaker brethren in the passage from darkness to light, from misery and suffering to happiness and peace, from lives of evil to right-thinking and right-doing.

III.

There is, however, another side to the present phase of the Jewish Question besides the one we have been considering. There is not merely a Jewish Question so far as the relation of the Jews to the world around them is concerned; there is a problem confronting the Jews which affects their relation to Judaism. It is to this *internal* phase of the question (as we may call it) that a collection of essays* by Josephine Lazarus is devoted. An earnest seeker after truth, filled with the noble aspirations that distinguished her lamented sister, Miss Lazarus attempts to define the present status of Judaism and to point out the needs of the hour.

The problem is an exceedingly difficult one. The entrance of the Jews into the current of modern thought has affected their religious beliefs as forcibly, as the rest of that portion of mankind has been affected which stands in the centre of our present civilization. The question asked by the German theologian Strauss some forty years ago, "Are we still Christians?" finds its parallel in the question, "Are we still Jews?" which has recently been discussed by the ablest representative of Jewish thought in this country.† There are many Jews, as there are many Christians, who are unable to accept the Bible as a work produced by superhuman agencies.‡ In the place of "Divine Revelation," Biblical criticism, in unison with modern thought, substitutes the term "historical evolution." The Divine element, both of the Old and of the New Testament, is to be sought in the spirit pervading it, in the contents of the sacred collections, but not in the manner in which they were produced. The

* "The Spirit of Judaism."

† E. G. Hirsch, of Chicago.

‡ E.g., a Jewish savant and rabbi, Abraham Geiger, as early as 1836.

Bible still remains the most wonderful of books, but by virtue of the unique development of a people's ideals that it reflects, by virtue of the influence that it has wielded, and because of its literary splendor. The study of it with an application of modern methods, in a historical spirit, and with a utilization of the researches made in this century in Oriental archæology, in Arabic customs and Semitic modes of thought, in comparative philology and comparative religion, is one of the most fascinating of tasks, and one of the most fruitful. But, as a consequence of the modern view taken of the Bible, its enactments are not regarded as authoritative by many Jews and Christians, and, in a measure, its doctrines, or what were supposed to be its doctrines, have been cast aside.

The religious history of Christianity and Judaism in this century may be described as an attempt to preserve the historical connection with the past, in the face of the contrast presented by the present to the past. Some have found the solution in differentiating between the Biblical spirit and Biblical authority, maintaining an adherence to the former, while rejecting the latter. Others have claimed that, for the sake of the spirit, the authority must be maintained. Within the limits marked by these two positions, various parties exist, both in the Christian and in the Jewish Church, while not a few parties have broken entirely with the past and with tradition, to take their stand on a broad platform, which, recognizing what is good and valuable in the past phases of the two religions, make the ethical ideals of humanity the highest authority for individual conduct—the final court of appeal. The same numerous shades of belief and unbelief found among Christians of to-day are met with among Jews. Judaism, as little as Christianity, represents a unit. For certain larger purposes, in educational and charitable movements more particularly, Jews unite as Christians do, but both feel that in matters of religion, uniformity no longer exists, and is no longer possible.

The belief in God is not involved in these differences, nor the belief in Immortality. Both these doctrines, though variously conceived, are regarded as independent of Judaism or Christianity, paramount to either and both. For the Christian,

several momentous doctrines are at stake,—the divinity of Christ, the question of salvation, the view to be taken of the Trinity, and the like. For the Jew, the case is somewhat simpler. The relation of the Jews to Judaism hinges upon the view to be taken of "Israel's Election." According to the old view, the Jews are divinely appointed as the bearers of the message of monotheism. But with the Bible as a collection, which though sacred was yet evolved in a natural manner, the mission of the Jews becomes merely a postulate of history, to be compared to the purposes which we find other nations fitted to carry out. If the mission of the Jews is merely a recognition of the purpose that they have served, and every nation has a mission given to it, then there is no *special* reason for the Jews to maintain a distinctive position as Jews. The Biblical enactments have no binding force upon them. The religious rites of the Old Testament are human institutions, as the Talmudic elaborations upon these rites are human. As such, they can be thrown aside when they have served their purpose and can be replaced by others, or they can be modified to suit changing conditions. All that can be demanded of the Jews is that they maintain their conception of monotheism pure and free from any anthropomorphic contamination, and, emphasizing the ethical teachings of their prophets, legislators, and sages, give to the universal traits of their religion a universal form, or at least a form that could become universal. This is practically the attitude of many thousands of Jews born and reared in Western Europe or America. Not all have the courage of their convictions as Miss Lazarus has, not many see the issue as clearly as she does. What is the solution? Upon this point, Miss Lazarus is not as definite as some might desire. She does not pose as a diviner of the future. Her endeavor is to rouse the Jews to a sense of the situation, rather than to act as a leader in a new religious movement. Apparently, she herself has not made up her mind exactly what is the right step to take, but there is no question in her mind as to the *direction* whither further religious progress among the Jews must tend. She

makes an earnest plea for more spirituality; and all will agree with her that questions of ritual and custom are of infinitely less importance than the attainment of a high standard of religious thought and conduct. But "spirituality" is a vague term. As a policy it does not admit of precise definition. But so much is certain that the cultivation of a high sense of honor in our dealings with our fellows and the strengthening of our sympathies with all that concerns mankind, are necessary conditions to the promotion of "spirituality" in our religious conceptions. It is an encouraging sign for the future to see the stress that all churches are now laying upon conduct as against the emphasis formerly placed upon creeds. Can there be any doubt of the outcome of this movement? The creed of the future will be shaped wholly by new ideals of conduct. Through such a creed, an effectual check will be given to the spirit of greed and materialism that constitutes the menace of every age unfolding an intellectual and industrial activity such as ours.

Miss Lazarus also enters a plea for a broader spirit in the synagogue. She would have Judaism take up, as one of its elements, the gospel of Love as preached by Christianity. In this plea she does not stand alone. Mr. Claude Montefiore, one of the ablest Biblical scholars of England and a close student of Judaism as well as of religious affairs in general, has a notable passage at the close of his "Hibbert Lectures" on "The religion of the ancient Hebrews"* of the same tenor as Miss Lazarus' proposition. Naturally, Mr. Montefiore's words have aroused considerable comment. The Jews, feeling themselves to be a minority, have that instinctive dread of taking a step that might affect their identity, which may be regarded as an inheritance of the timidity engendered through ghetto life. The Christian Gospel of Love is not opposed to the spirit of Judaism. The heart of the Hebrew prophets is broad enough to embrace other nations besides the Hebrews, and even in the legal enactments of the Penta-

* "Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews." London, 1892, pp. 550-52.

teach the spirit of love is not absent. So the teachers of Judaism tell us. That less stress was laid upon the element of love in religion by the Jews in the past is due to the hate which the world manifested towards them. The "loss of identity"—there's the rub! Shall Israel, it is asked, now that it has come out triumphant from the trials of the past, deliberately surrender to the majority? It is natural that this question should be asked, but is it just to apply the term "surrender" to a proposition which merely involves the reassertion of an old principle? And if, as the result of this step, a closer assimilation should be brought about between Judaism and *certain* types of Christianity, is this a misfortune that must be averted at all hazards, even at the expense of intellectual honesty? If so, then the ideals of the Hebrew prophets whose teachings favor assimilation should also be thrown aside. Here, then, is the crucial point. On this ground the issue must be fought out, with what result no one can foretell at present.

The situation is a novel one for Judaism. So much, however, may be said. The internal phase of the Jewish Question is closely bound up with its external phase. The course of Judaism is dependent upon the treatment accorded to the Jews, and it is, after all, the Jews that make Judaism, and not the reverse. If, as seems likely, the social feeling still prevalent against the Jews will gradually die out, there is no doubt that the universal element in the Jewish religion will become its dominant feature. As long, however, as discriminations are made against them, the distinctive features impressed upon the religion by its *tribal origin* will be maintained. The duty devolving upon the Jews is clear. To merit by their lives, by their example, by their devotion to the ideals of humanity, the good-will and respect of those with whom they dwell, and in their attitude towards their religion to be guided by their convictions. Convictions, maturely formed and firmly held, cannot lead us astray. The vexed problems of religion can be solved in no other way than by intellectual courage. The duty of Christians is no less clear. To purge their hearts of all bitterness and prejudice, to practise the

gospel of humanity as taught by Jesus, to protest against wrong, injustice, and discriminations of any kind against any body of individuals. As for the future, let both Jews and Christians learn to regard it with that calmness which characterized the ancient prophets of Israel, who, true to their name, which means "proclaim," felt that their duty was ended when they spoke out the convictions of their hearts, irrespective of criticism or consequences, and then acted according to those convictions. It did not lay within their province, and it does not lie within ours, to shape the future. Not policy but conviction should be our guiding star. This is the great lesson of the past for all of us.

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HEGEL'S THEORY OF PUNISHMENT.

WE may define punishment as the infliction of pain on a person because he has done wrong. That it must be painful, and that it must be inflicted on a person who has done, or is thought to have done, wrong, will be generally admitted. But we must also remember that it is essential that it should be inflicted *because* of the wrong-doing. In the little books written by the authors who educated our parents, the boy who went out without his mother's leave was struck by lightning. This cannot, unless theology is introduced, be considered as a punishment. For the lightning would have struck with equal readiness any boy in the same spot, although provided with the most ample parental authority. And the little books written by the moralists who are anxious to educate our children, although less amusing than their predecessors, are often not more accurate. They delight in talking of the rewards and punishments which Nature herself distributes among us. But Nature, though she often destroys, never punishes. For the moral value of an action makes no difference to her. She takes no account of intention or purpose. She destroys, with